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*From Comte to Benjamin Kidd.* The appeal to biology or evolution for human guidance. By ROBERT MACKINTOSH, Professor at Lancashire Independent College. Pp. xxiii + 311. The Macmillan Co. \$1.50.

THIS is precisely the sort of book to be expected from an author who confesses that he has been using Kidd's *Social Evolution* as a textbook for a class in sociology. Mr. Benjamin Kidd has about the same standing among the sociologists that Darius Green would have among the physicists. The author's evident assumption to the contrary excludes him from serious attention by the sociologists. Nothing that he can say about the content of sociological thought can have any weight with men who are familiar with the subject. Yet the book is of a sort to have vogue among people who cannot discriminate between writers who are authorities on their theme and those who are not.

It would be difficult to decide whether the author's attitude is most amateurish toward "evolution," or "biology," or "sociology." He knows what he thinks about the "moral consciousness," but he has a rare collection of misconceptions with reference to the thinking of the people who think most responsibly about those other subjects. The process which this type of thinker follows consists of turning a disapproved conception into a bogie and then into a monster. For instance (p. 45), the innocent and scarcely novel suggestion is attributed to "some younger students of sociology" that "one ought to learn from history in what line things are moving, and then to help the movement with all one's powers." Whatever we may think about the adequacy of this formula, we can have little respect for the historic sense of a writer who has nothing better to say of the uses of history than is contained in the puerile retort: "When the first railway tubular bridges were erected—the Britannia bridge over the Menai Straits, the Victoria bridge at Montreal—they were made much heavier than has been found necessary in the light of fuller knowledge. What should we say of the wisacre who proposed to carry out the principle of lightening railway bridges by constructing them of lace or gossamer?"! By steps like this the author reaches the profound conclusion that "history cannot guide us very securely" (p. 47). On the basis of this result, however, he proceeds in the same paragraph to dogmatize about the positive guidance that history can afford after all. This is fussiness posing as philosophy.

That the book cannot be treated seriously by the sociologists follows further from the author's assumption that the content of current

sociology is to be found in Comte and Benjamin Kidd! All sociologists concede some sort and degree of credit to Comte for formulating the demand for sociology. Almost without exception — indeed, I do not believe there are any exceptions — the sociologists regard Comte rather as a proposer of the sociological problem than as a very large contributor to its solution. On the other hand, I have yet to learn of the first sociologist of any recognized standing who has ever consented to class Benjamin Kidd among sociologists at all. The author's program is, therefore, very much like an attempt to discredit electrical engineering by passing in review, first, the writings of Benjamin Franklin, and, second, an essay on physics composed by a talented, but untrained, government clerk. The one is obsolete, the other has not arrived.

Mr. Mackintosh discusses, in Part II, "Simple Evolutionism — Spencer, Stephen;" in Part III, "Darwinism, or Struggle for Existence;" in Part IV, "Hyper-Darwinism — Weismann, Kidd." The argument is not without force in many passages, as related to the particular author in question. It is utterly without appreciation of the perspective in which these authors are to be seen, if generalizations about "biology," or "evolution," or "evolutionary ethics," or "sociology" are to be ventured. The author builded better than he knew when (p. 278), in summing up his essay, he referred to it as "wanderings."

A. W. S.

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*L'Année sociologique*, publiée sous la direction d'ÉMILE DURKHEIM. Deuxième année (1897-8). Paris: Félix Alcan, 1899. Pp. 596.

PROFESSOR DURKHEIM and his collaborators have rendered a great service to sociology in this publication. Like the first volume, it is largely bibliographical. The two original monographs are: *De la définition des phénomènes religieux*, Durkheim; and *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, MM. Hubert and Mauss. The notices of literature that appeared between July, 1897, and June, 1898, occupy 450 pages. The main divisions of the material are placed under the heads: Sociology: (1) general, (2) religious, (3) moral, (4) juridical, (5) criminal, (6) economic, (7) social morphology.

This is one of the indispensable works for a sociological library, although it does not seem to me that the reviewers always have a point of view which presents the most just estimate of the literature.

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